



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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Saving the National Youth Sports Program a Matter of Priorities **By Congressman Ron Kind**

I was disappointed with the opinion of the Leader Telegram that the National Youth Sports Program (NYSP), which serves 625 children in the Eau Claire area and is a model program for others like it across the country, is a disposable service that doesn't make the cut on our list of national priorities. At a time when we should be investing more in our kids and preparing them to compete in today's global economy, pulling the plug on successful youth programs, especially those that help communities most in need, is both misguided and short-sighted.

As much as anyone, I have been critical of the reckless fiscal policies which have produced record deficits and compromised the long-term financial health of the nation. Choices have been made to increase government spending and to cut taxes at a time of war. Something has to give. Someone has to sacrifice. Well, I for one do not believe that we should be volunteering our children and their futures.

Investing in our kids should be a priority, not a place to trim the fat. The prevailing domestic policies in Washington as of late have been based on a set of priorities that puts tax cuts for millionaires ahead of our children's needs. For instance, just last week, the House Education Committee, on which I serve, approved the largest cut ever in financial aid for college students. At a time when millions of students and their families are struggling to pay for college, we should not be balancing the budget on their backs. Because I believe we should put our kids first, I fought to stop this action just as I fought to stop the elimination of NYSP funds.

As the editorial noted, the NYSP is a 'wonderful' program. I couldn't agree more. Supported by both private and public sources, the NYSP offers more than 76,000 participants nationwide a unique opportunity to benefit from resources made available by local colleges and universities. Participants benefit from close contact with caring and dedicated adults and learn about the discipline and self-esteem that organized sports provide. In addition to sports activities, the NYSP provides enrichment components about career and educational opportunities, study habits, drug and alcohol abuse, nutrition enhancement and a complete medical examination. There is just simply no other comprehensive developmental program that provides real and positive changes in the lives of economically disadvantaged youth in our community.

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The Leader Telegram is right in criticizing federal government's deficit creating fiscal policies, but what we should be more critical of is domestic policies that have borrowed heavily from our children, veterans, and seniors in order to fluff the featherbeds of a wealthy few. NYSP has served more than 10,000 Eau Claire kids for 25 years. It deserves our continued support.

Congressman Ron Kind represents Wisconsin's Third Congressional District and is a member of the House Education Committee. For more information on NYSP, please visit the website www.nyscorp.org/nysp/home.html